



**STATEMENT**

**OF**

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**BEFORE**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY  
AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

**“THREAT CONVERGENCE ALONG THE BORDER: HOW DOES DRUG  
TRAFFICKING IMPACT OUR BORDERS?”**

**Tuesday, June 14, 2005**

**2:00 pm**

**Washington D.C.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon, Chairman Souder, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished Members of the Committee. My name is Ralph Utley, and I am the Acting Director of the Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement (OCE) for the Department of Homeland Security and Acting United States Interdiction Coordinator. It is my privilege to appear before you to discuss drug trafficking and its impact on our borders. The Office of Counternarcotics mission is to lead a unified Departmental effort to prevent and deter illegal drugs from coming into the United States.

Today's hearing on "Threat Convergence Along the Border: How Does Drug Trafficking Impact our Borders?" is central to the mission of my organization. My core mission is to coordinate policy and operations within the Department and between the Department and other Federal departments and agencies with respect to stopping the entry of illegal drugs into the United States.

Before I discuss the borders, I would like to share with you the results of last year's interdiction efforts in the transit zone. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, the Department of Homeland Security in cooperation with the interagency removed over 225 metric tons of drugs prior to the entry of those drugs into the United States. The United States Coast Guard had an exceptionally banner year for FY 2004 seizing over 109 metric tons in the transit zone and through June 1, 2005, the U.S. Coast Guard has seized over 81 metric tons of cocaine. Much of this interdiction was supported by CBP assets.

Other DHS agencies also set record years in interdiction in FY 2004 U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) seized over 905 metric tons of marijuana, 26 metric tons of cocaine and 1.3 metric tons of heroin bound for United States. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was involved in the investigation efforts and apprehension of 712 metric tons of marijuana, 150 metric tons of cocaine, 1.3 metric tons of heroin and 1 metric ton of methamphetamines that were headed to the streets of the United States.

The majority of these drugs come through the Southwest border, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

To combat drug trafficking along the Southwest and Northern borders, OCE is committed to working with our Mexican and Canadian government counterparts. Only with open communication can bi-national cooperation be attained. The Department is actively engaged with Mexican law enforcement officials through the Senior Law Enforcement Plenary (SLEP) and the Bilateral Interdiction Working Group (BIWG). The Department is also working with Canadian law enforcement officials through the Integrated Border Enforcement Teams. It is through these venues that bilateral ties are strengthened and the United States has a better chance of collectively interdicting drugs.

OCE will continue to work with the existing intelligence and operations centers along the border and will ensure adequate counterdrug resources are applied to the problem. In addition, OCE will continue to coordinate policy within the Department of Homeland Security to streamline Departmental and interagency operations. We must make sure that information is being disseminated vertically up and down the Department so that policies and intelligence support

operational units in the field. We need to fuse and exploit all the information that we learn across the country so that when a CBP agent in Arizona learns of a new smuggling method, that information is fed up to our intelligence analysts, incorporated where appropriate into our strategy to combat smuggling, and disseminated across the Department and interagency to others focused on the same problem.

Our focus must extend beyond the Department itself. We must review and make use of information coming from the intelligence community, and we must play an active role in providing operational feedback back to the intelligence community. Sharing information across the Federal Government is critical if we are to succeed. To that end, I am committed to making sure that our law enforcement and intelligence partners across the Federal Government have appropriate access to the Department's information and analysis, to the maximum extent possible under the law, while protecting the privacy rights and civil liberties of Americans. By the same token, we must sit as full partners at the table with full access to information from the intelligence community.

Finally, we must inform and communicate with our state, local, tribal and private-sector partners. As information comes in, we need to ensure it is disseminated to the right people in a way that they can use it to strengthen their efforts and contribute effectively to ours.

Very shortly, I will be providing to the counterdrug community the National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (NICCP) and Interdiction Planning Guidance (IPG). These documents will optimize the U.S. resources that are committed to countering the drug threat along our borders.

OCE is also drafting a Department-wide counterdrug policy. This policy will outline current counterdrug resources of the Department of Homeland Security and will address intelligence-driven operations and initiatives to ensure that maximum results are achieved from all DHS counterdrug efforts. This policy will also address land border, maritime and airborne enforcement as well as international and training issues which are aligned with the National Drug Control Strategy.

OCE has taken steps to be actively engaged in the intelligence community, specifically the National Counterterrorism Center, Joint Terrorism Task Force, El Paso Intelligence Center, National Drug Intelligence Center, Defense Intelligence Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency's Crime and Narcotics Center. Our goal is to serve as a conduit between DHS and the counterdrug community as we respond to our congressional mandate to track and sever the connection between drugs and terror.

In closing, the ability to stop the flow of drugs into the United States is a necessity for national security and public safety. By aggressively enforcing our existing laws and working transparently to better fuse intelligence, we seek to deter drug traffickers and terrorist organizations who threaten our way of life.

I would like to thank you Chairman Souder and Members of the Subcommittee for this opportunity to speak to you, and I look forward to answering your questions.